Questions and Answers for Facilitators
Maricopa County Child & Family Team Process
March 26, 2002

Following many months of training and coaching from an array of talented out-of-state consultants, including Vroon VanDenBerg, and the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group, the 200 Kids Project was encouraged to develop a working process that would capture the elements best suited for children and families in Maricopa County. This document is a compilation of questions and answers about many aspects of the process being used in Maricopa County. It has been reviewed and edited by members of the Steering Committee for the 200 Kids Project, and it represents input across the various child-serving agencies in the State, as well as input from family members. The original version of the document is February 12, 2002. It is anticipated that this will be an evolving document, with additions and revisions to follow as we learn more about how the process best serves the children, families, and communities of Maricopa County.

Child & Family Teams:

1) **Q:** <u>Who decides who the members of a Child & Family Team should be?</u>
A: The facilitator assists the family in choosing its team members. The final decision belongs to the family, although, the facilitator may help the family consider the benefits of having certain people on the team if the family is hesitant to include them. The team should ideally be at least 50% informal supports. Members can always be added to the team as the time passes. So, start with whoever the family is comfortable with, and work toward adding more informal supports and key decision makers as time progresses. In the case where a government agency has legal custody of a child, the agency representative and the parents have equal input regarding who the team members should be.

2) **Q:** <u>What if some team members want a person to be on the team who the parents or child do not want on the team?</u>
A: The parent has the final say on who the team members are (except when the State has custody of the child, in which case the parent and the agency worker should have equal input). Team members may advise the parent of people they wish to see on the team, but ultimately the parent's decision should be respected. The team cannot outvote the parent and put a member on the team that the parent does not want. If there is a key person who needs information from the team, but the parent does not choose to have the person on the team, consider appointing a liaison or team representative to communicate between the person and the team.

3) **Q:** <u>How are decisions made on the team? By majority vote, or is it the parent's final decision?</u>
A: The parent has final decision on plans made by the team, except in the case where the State has legal custody of the child, in which case the parent and

agency representative share in decision making. The team may advise the parent on decisions, but may not outvote the parent (or agency representative). When the State has custody of a child, the agency representative should allow the parents to make as many of the decisions as possible, and should respect their preferences. The agency representative may need to establish a bottom line or non-negotiable, but allow the parents to make the decisions beyond that point. For example, he or she might say "You cannot have unsupervised visitation at this time (*the bottom line or non-negotiable),* but you may choose your preference of a visit supervisor (*the flexibility for choice within the bottom line*)."

4) **Q:** <u>When should I invite the child to the meeting?</u>
A: The child should be included in meetings whenever the team decides it would be appropriate. Many teams decide to include children age twelve and older as a general rule. The team should consider the emotional maturity of the child in addition to the chronological age. In the event the child is old enough and emotionally mature enough to participate, the child should always be included in the meeting, and the team should not meet to plan for the child without the child present. In the event the parent does not want a child on the team because of a contentious relationship, consideration may be given to developing a support team for the parent and one for the child, meshing the two teams as appropriate. However, the ideal is to include them together on the same team, using facilitation skills such as establishing and enforcing ground rules, reframing and redirecting, to help the child and parent work together.

5) **Q:** <u>Is there any type of documentation I can give to families that explains the concept of Child and Family Teams?</u>
A: A brochure has been developed for families that explains the Child & Family Team Process. You may obtain one from the 300 Kids Project staff or your coach.

6) **Q:** <u>What is a good way to explain the Child and Family Team process to a family?</u>
A: You may wish to describe it as a process that helps children and families take advantage of their family and community resources as well as their professional resources in a way that builds off of what is good about the family. This process encourages creative planning that customizes plans toward the preferences and culture of the family. You might also use the brochure for families, and/or the help of a parent mentor, if appropriate.

7) **Q:** <u>What are some things to avoid saying when describing the Child and Family Team process to a family?</u>
A: Avoid describing the Child and Team Process as a lawsuit settlement aimed at helping families get what they want out of the system. Avoid emphasizing the flex funding available. These approaches, though well-intentioned, may lead to greater difficulty in focusing on aspects of the process that build upon families' informal supports and that involve respectful collaboration with agencies.

8) **Q:** Are there some people who might be inappropriate members of a Child & Family Team?
A: A parent who has severely abused a child to the extent it would be traumatic for the child to be in the same room as the parent may not be appropriate to be on the same team as the child (for example, sexual abuse, or severe emotional or physical abuse). In these circumstances, the parent and child may need to work with separate teams until a time when it is appropriate to join the teams together. Note that this would be an exception to the normal way of proceeding, and separate teams should be used only under the most extreme of circumstances. Before deciding to split a team, consult with your coach, your supervisor, the parent, and the child(ren). In addition, any team member who is not able to be supportive of the parents and refrain from placing blame or shame on the parents may not be an appropriate team member. You may need to work with such members before meetings to help them act appropriately, and you may need to prompt them during the meetings. If they are unable to stay strengths based and supportive, a different team member may need to be chosen.

9) **Q:** What if there are no natural parents to speak of? Are foster parents considered the child's family? What if the child lives in a group home and has no parents?
A: If there are no natural parents, the child becomes the focus of the team. Foster parents may or may not be the closest thing to family for the child, depending upon how long the child has lived there, how strong their relationship is with the child, and what the permanent plan is for the child. (The foster family may be considered "family" for purposes of qualifying for certain supports and services). However, keep in mind that foster parents are also a paid support. When there are no natural parents, the legal guardian and the child have final say in team decisions (When the child is a Ward of the Court, the legal guardian representative is the government agency worker). When a child lives in a group home and has no parents involved, identify the people the child feels closest to and whom he or she trusts most to be on the team. In many instances the facilitator will need to connect the child with people in the community who can take on the role of being close, trusted advisors.

10) **Q:** What if the case plan does not call for reunification between the child and parents? Does the team still work with the parents?
A: This depends on the goals of the parents. If they are in support of the non-reunification goal the entire team can work together for the accomplishment of that goal. If the parents still desire reunification, but the Court has decided against it as the case plan goal, the parents may need to have their own separate team to try to work on their goals while the child has a separate team working on the goals for him or her. Some teams have helped parents succeed in being able to persuade the Court to change the plan back to reunification. If this happens, or if the parents decide to support the non-reunification case plan goal, they can re-join the child's team. The ideal is to have the entire team, including the parents, working together for the goal, even if it is not reunification. When parents feel supported and are treated according to the principles, they may be more likely to support the

Court's decision for a different case plan, such as guardianship, adoption, independent living, etc. In cases where the case plan goal is Severance and Adoption, consult with the DES case manager regarding the decision of whether to use the Child and Family Team process with this family.

11) **Q:** Are people who live out of state ever on Child and Family Teams?
A: Out-of-state team members may be a critical part of the Child and Family Team if they are trusted and needed by the family. These members may have to appear telephonically at meetings, although there may be ways to get them to the meeting in person for particularly critical meetings (taking advantage of vacations the family makes, the family may be willing to pay for their trip, or there may be other resources available to help get them here). When helping a family choose their team members, do not limit the choices to people only in the immediate area.

Process:

12) **Q:** Where is an appropriate location to hold Child and Family Team meetings?
A: The most appropriate setting for meetings is wherever the family feels most comfortable. Often (but not always) this is in their home or at a neutral setting (you may obtain from the 300 Kids Project staff a list of some no-cost community locations that may be available for use by Child and Family Teams). Allow the family to pick the setting—do not hold Child and Family Team meetings at agency offices unless this is the preference of the family.

13) **Q**: How frequently should Child and Family Team meetings be held?
A: Child and Family team meetings should be held as often as needed. This will usually be more frequently at the beginning of the process with the family and during times of crisis. Some teams meet as often as weekly during these times. As the child and family's needs and goals begin to be met, and when crisis situations have stabilized, meetings will be less frequent. The Child and Family Team usually will have a good sense for when the team needs to meet next. However, they may need some prompting from the facilitator when their decisions regarding when to meet seem too close together or too far apart.

14) **Q:** What should the length of the Child and Family Team meetings be?
A: There are many different options regarding meeting length. As a general rule, the meeting length should be whatever works best for the team.

Many teams do best to meet more frequently for shorter periods of time (30-45 minutes), handling only one or two topics (life domains) per meeting. The advantage to this approach is team members feel their time is respected because the meeting lengths are short, and team members may be less likely to tire of the planning process during the course of the meeting. Meeting frequently for short periods of time also allows the team to break the process into very manageable chunks, which can be beneficial for families in crisis or families who feel overwhelmed when too many things are happening at once.

Other teams prefer to meet less frequently, for a longer period of time each meeting (such as one to two hours). These teams address several topics (life domains) during each meeting. This approach works well for children and families who are not in crisis and who can handle many things going on at once. The less frequent, longer meetings may also be helpful for teams where many members have long distances to travel to the meetings and would prefer to make the trip less often, taking more time at each meeting.

Facilitators should be sure the decision regarding meeting length is made with the needs of the family team in mind rather than simply the facilitator's preference.

15) **Q:** At what time of day should meetings be held?
A: Hold meetings at the time the people chosen by the family for their team are most likely to be able to attend. This may mean that some meetings need to be scheduled in the evening or on weekends. Facilitators must help families strike a balance between the availability of informal supports, who often work during the day, and the professionals on the team, who typically do not work evenings or weekends. The primary consideration should be the family's schedule and that of their informal supports. However, many families are willing to be flexible and creative in scheduling meeting times that work for the entire team when they feel the support of the team. Some facilitators are able to help family members get cooperation from their employers by providing a letter the family member can give to an employer explaining the importance of the Child and Family Team Process. (Be careful not to put confidential information in the letter and make sure the family member approves the content and delivers the letter voluntarily.) Some creative solutions have involved the employer allowing the family member to flex some time, have extra paid time off, hold the meeting at the place of employment during a lunch break, etc.

16) **Q:** How do I help the family design a plan that draws from their strengths?
A: Beginning with an in-depth Strengths and Family Culture Discovery is crucial because it provides the building blocks for developing the plan. The Strengths and Culture Discovery document is constantly evolving – continue adding new strengths and additional information about family culture throughout your work with the family. Discovering the strengths of the family is only the beginning; the strengths will be used to develop a customized plan that meets the family's needs. The action plan should be derived directly from specific strengths of the family, in a manner that reflects the family's culture. You may use the tool "Child and Family Team Meeting Notes" to help ensure that the plan relates directly to the family strengths and that it meets their needs. Planning from strengths will lead to creative, customized plans. Even traditional services can be customized according to strengths (for example, rather than simply sending the family to counseling, finding a style of counseling that works for their particular strengths and that is accessible for their situation).

17) **Q:** What is family culture, and how does it affect Child and Family Teams?
A: Each family has its own unique culture which includes much more than the family's racial heritage. It includes traditions, preferences, rituals, values, beliefs, religion, political sentiments, rules, habits, and many other elements that form the core characteristics of the family. No two families will share exactly the same family culture. As you learn about the strengths of the family, be sure to discover key elements of its culture. The unique family culture should be reflected in the Strength and Culture Discovery document, and the action plan for the family should be customized in a manner that considers the family culture.

18) **Q:** How do I help the family design a plan that makes sure to address their underlying needs?
A: Facilitators should consider consistently the question of whether the plans resulting from the Child and Family Team meetings are addressing the true needs of the family, or whether they are just temporary solutions. Facilitators can help the family recognize and plan for their underlying needs by asking the question, "If this plan works, will it take care of the real needs?" For example, planning to place a teenage girl on birth control may address the family's fear that she will become pregnant. But the underlying need may be for the teenager to develop a healthy sexual identity, which may require much more planning than simply giving birth control. It may require a great deal of patience to identify and address the family's underlying needs, and facilitators may best approach the task from the perspective of helping the family discover these needs for themselves. Facilitators may use skills of prompting and soliciting input from the team to help bring out the underlying needs, being careful not to create a situation where team members create an unequal relationship by appearing to be psychology experts telling the family what their "true issues" are. Instead, help team members offer supportive insights aimed at helping the family reflect on their real needs.

19) **Q:** What are ground rules and how do they fit in the Child and Family Team meeting?
A: Ground rules are an important part of Child and Family Team meetings. They are the rules the team members agree to follow during meetings in order to help the family and team members feel safe at the meeting and feel open to working together effectively. Discuss this with the family before the meeting ("What will you need from the other team members in order to feel comfortable?"), and with any team members you anticipate may have difficulty adhering to the ground rules. Review the ground rules at the beginning of the first Child and Family Team meeting, and refer to them during meetings whenever a team member needs a reminder. Common ground rules include not blaming or shaming, being honest, keeping information confidential, being open-minded and creative, etc.

20) **Q:** How directive should I be as the facilitator? Do I share my thoughts and opinions?
A: Facilitators all have different styles. On one end of the spectrum is the facilitator who sees him or herself in a completely neutral role, not wanting to

offer any suggestions or input. On the other end is the facilitator who constantly inserts opinions and ideas. Effective facilitators respond to families in the fashion they believe would most likely help the family. Some families need some suggestions and input from the facilitator, while others need the facilitator to stand back and let them do their work. Always be careful, however, that the team remains the family's, and that the family remains the primary expert on their situation. When offering input, a facilitator might ask "What do you think of this idea?", rather than telling the family what to do. Always give the family the final decision (except in the case where the State has custody of the children, in which case the government agency worker shares the decision with the family at an appropriate level). Ideas are only useful if the family is comfortable with them.

21) **Q:** What if the team does not agree with the decisions of the family member?
A: The team cannot outvote the family… It is the family's final decision. The facilitator can help the family listen to input from the other team members, and can help them recognize the degree to which the team members feel strongly about their ideas. However, the decision is always the family's. (The exception being when the State has custody of the children, in which case the State Government worker shares the decision with the family).

22) **Q:** Who decides the goals for the family team meeting? How many goal areas should we address at one meeting?
A: The family chooses the goal(s) for the meeting. See the question regarding meeting length for a discussion of how many goal areas to address during each meeting.

23) **Q:** What is the difference between a goal and a goal area (life domain)?
A: A goal area (life domain) is the general category of planning for the family (employment, safety, relationship, housing, fun, etc.). All families have these areas in common as important parts of life. However, a specific goal is unique to each family. It is a statement of "Life would be better if …" within the goal area, and an explanation of why. For example, a goal area of "Family Relationships" is important to nearly all families, but each family would set a different goal within that area. One might say, "Life would be better if we argued less because so much fighting is a strain on mom's fragile health." The goal area is the generic category of planning; the actual goal is a very specific and personal statement of focus by the family.

24) **Q:** When should I decide to use the Child and Family Team process with a family?
A: Each agency may decide how to use the Child and Family Team process for families. Choices may range from using it with all families, to using it in special circumstances where traditional approaches have not worked. The Child & Family Team process can be used for *all* families, for example, by varying its level of structure and intensity (that is, families with less intensive needs might have a smaller team, perhaps consisting of

only the parents, child, and one professional; and their team might meet infrequently, in a relatively informal manner. Families with more complex or intensive needs might have a team consisting of many members, might meet frequently, and might proceed in a very structured manner). This latter approach has, for example, been embraced by the behavioral health system in Arizona.

25) **Q:** <u>How extensive should the engagement phase of the process be? Who do I need to talk to? Do I need to collect records? Do I meet all the participants in person ahead of time, or will a phone call be enough?</u>
A: There may be some variance to the extent of your engagement activities. The bottom line is you want to learn enough about the family to allow you to be as helpful as possible as the facilitator. This, at a minimum, will include meeting in person with the family and child to conduct the Strengths & Culture Discovery and plan for the first meeting. It will also include speaking with each of the team members identified by the family, either by phone or in person. If there are any providers or agency personnel who are not going to be on the team, you should at least speak with them to get their input. Speak with each team member about the Child and Family Team concept and prepare them for the first meeting. Help them begin thinking about the family in a strengths-based manner and prepare to share any needs the family has in a respectful way. The degree to which you prepare the team members during engagement will have a tremendous impact on how smoothly the team operates, making your job as the facilitator much easier during the team meetings. While you do not need to duplicate the files kept by other agencies for this family, you may wish to collect some basic paperwork, such as Court reports, terms of probation, IEP reports, parole plans, CPS case plans, treatment plans, reports from service providers, and any assessments that have been completed. Be sure, if the paper work relates to treatment of the parents (not just the child), or if it deals with any type of substance abuse, that you obtain a separate release of information from the parent for the agency providing these documents. Efforts are underway to provide basic orientations regarding the Child and Family Team process to agency members who will participate in Child and Family Teams. This will help them understand the philosophy behind the approach and consider how to be a helpful team member.

26) **Q:** <u>Should I pair up with someone to help co-facilitate my child and family team meetings?</u>
A: Typically one person is the primary facilitator of the team, and this person has responsibility for helping the family through the entire Child and Family Team process. However, there are several reasons it may be helpful to team up with someone else during the Child and Family Team meeting portion of the process. One reason is you can always use help writing on flip chart paper or taking notes so that you can concentrate more fully on facilitating the meeting. Second, the other person can give you feedback on the process and on your facilitation skills. Third, the other facilitator can help out by intervening in the event your mind goes

blank or a heated issue arises during the meeting. Or, they may simply be able to help by contributing a good idea. The challenge is finding another facilitator who has time to accompany you. This person may be your coach or another facilitator who is going through or has completed the training. If none of these people are available, you may wish to ask your supervisor or a co-worker to help. Or, you could solicit the help of one of the team members for taking notes or writing on the flip chart paper. After all, the hope is that the team will eventually learn to support itself, even eventually taking over the role of being able to facilitate Child and Family Team meetings on their own, relying less and less on the help of professionals.

27) **Q:** <u>Should I ever hold a meeting without the family present?</u>
A: A Child and Family Team Meeting should never be held without a parent present (or, if no parents are involved with the child, a meeting should never be held without the Child and/or legal guardian present). Holding a meeting without the parent or legal guardian present would go against one of the most important principles in the Child and Family Team Process, as you would be planning FOR the family, rather than planning WITH them. In the case were there are no parents and the child is in a group home, the meeting should never be held without the child present. When a child has foster parents but no natural parents, the ideal would be to have the both the foster parents and the legal guardian (DES worker) present. The meeting should never be held without at least the legal guardian present.

28) **Q:** <u>What is a Family Mentor, and how does one differ from a Parent Aide or a Behavior Coach for a family?</u>
A: A Family Mentor (also sometimes called a “Parent Mentor” or “Family Involvement Specialist”) is an individual who has experience successfully navigating and accessing the children’s social service delivery system for his/her child, a foster or adoptive child, or another family member; and who is willing to share knowledge, skills, experiences, resources, time and support with the child and/or family. The person may be a volunteer, or they may be paid by an agency. They differ from a Behavioral Coach or a Parent Aide in that their experience and orientation is from going through the system. They are there for support and assistance in understanding and navigating the system, not to work on specific behavioral objectives. In many systems of care, family members report these individuals are some of the most helpful for them in the Child and Family Team Process.

29) **Q:** <u>What are the underlying needs of the family and what role do they play in the process?</u>
A: Underling needs are what the child and family really need in order to make progress and improve. They may be more in-depth or hidden than the presenting issues, and the family may or may not be aware of them at first. The Child and Family Team helps the family identify these underlying needs in a strengths-

based, supportive manner, and then builds a customized plan from the family strengths in order to meet the needs.

30) **Q:** <u>When is a family ready to graduate from a facilitated Child and Family Team process?</u>
A: There is no fixed length of time for a Child and Family Team to be in existence. The goals are to help most or all of the professionals on the team work their way out of the family's life, and to help the family learn to use the Child and Family Team process on their own, with their informal and community supports. Some clues that the family may soon no longer need professional facilitation for their Child and Family Team are: 1) A very high percentage of team membership is made up of informal supports, rather than professionals; 2) The family begins to express that they no longer need so much help or support; 3) The majority of supports and services for the family are informal and natural, rather than paid and professional; 4) Meeting frequency decreases; and 5) There are no longer major safety or crisis issues. When a family is ready to "graduate" from the process, help them make a natural transition to relying on their informal resources, and help them learn how to call a family team meeting on their own when it may be needed in the future.

31) **Q:** <u>What happens if a facilitator has to transition out of that role with a family?</u>
A: Facilitators should remain in their role with the family whenever possible. In the even a transition must occur to a new facilitator, the preference would be to transition to a new facilitator who is already part of the team and who has been through Child and Family Team Facilitator training. If no such person is already on the team, consider one of the following options: 1) Transition the facilitation to one of the informal supports on the team who will remain in the family's life for a long period of time, and help them learn the facilitation skills; 2) Pick a member of the family team who would do a good job as the facilitator (consider the parent's preference of who this person should be) and help them get the training and coaching to become a facilitator; 3) as a last resort, you could bring in a new facilitator who has been through the training, but has not been on the family team. If this must be the case, pick someone who has some type of connection to the family (through an agency the family is familiar with, etc.) and spend as much time as possible helping him or her transition into this role before you stop being the facilitator. Your supervisor may also be helpful in providing stability to the team while role of facilitator is under transition.

32) **Q:** <u>Should I bring food to Child and Family Team meetings?</u>
A: Food, even if just snacks, often adds a positive element to the Child and Family Team meeting atmosphere by helping people be relaxed and enjoy themselves. However, this is not always the case. Some families do not want food present, so always ask the family for their preference. If you do bring food, how is it paid for? Flex funding is an option, but some families have been offended when flex funding has been used to purchase food while some of their basic needs go unmet (for example, deciding not to use flex funds to repair the family's car

because you do not want to create dependence on flex funds, but then turning around and spending flex funds to buy a sub sandwich for a team meeting may seem a misplacing of priorities).

33) **Q:** How soon do I need to type the write-up from the Child and Family Team meeting, and to whom do I send copies when written?
A: It should be typed and distributed within seven days of the actual Child and Family Team meeting. Send a copy to all members of the Child and Family team (regardless of whether they were at the particular meeting), place one in your file, and give a copy to the following people: your supervisor, your coach (including your in-state coach if your primary coach is out-of-state), the 200 Kids Project director, and anyone that your agency protocol may instruct you to. You may choose to distribute these in person, by mail, through e-mail, or by fax. You may be able to save time for yourself in other work tasks by cutting and pasting content from these write-ups into your case notes and/or reports.

34) **Q:** How is progress going to be measured so that we know whether these families are being better served by this process?
A: Progress is being measured through case reviews, qualitative interviews with family members, and CANS assessments in the mental health system. In addition, various agencies continue to use their individual tools. Work is being done to try to unify some assessments across systems, but this will take time to develop. If you, as the facilitator, will ever be responsible for administration of any of these measures, you will receive training and instructions regarding them before being asked to use them.

35) **Q:** Which documents constitute the Child and Family Team Plan? Are these different from a traditional case plan, treatment plan, crisis plan, etc.?
A: The Child and Family Team Plan is an evolving set of documents that includes the following: The Strengths and Culture Discovery, the Write-ups from each Child and Family Team meeting, the Crisis Plan, and the Safety plan (when applicable). This will be a unique set of documents from traditional case plans, crisis plans, and treatment plans. However, the content from the Child and Family Team Plan documents should to be incorporated into existing agency plans so that there can be consistency between all agencies that plan for the family. The eventual goal is for there to be a single, universal plan format shared between agencies, but in the mean time agencies can use the Child and Family Team Plan to provide unity to the separate plan documents generated by each agency.

36) **Q:** What should I do with the Child and Family Team Plan?
A: Maintain a copy in the case file and distribute copies to each team member and to any others as instructed (eg. 200 Kids Project Director, your coach, your supervisor, etc.) Your agency may provide additional direction regarding use for these documents. You may or may not be asked to include them with court reports, your agency's traditional case planning documents, and in other situations.

37) **Q:** How do I know whether I need to do a crisis plan and/or safety plan for the child?
A: All families need crisis plans. They predict what is most likely to go wrong, prepare to prevent the situation, and plan what to do in the event it happens. Safety plans are used when a child exhibits dangerous behavior (sexual acting out, fire setting, dangerous aggression, etc.). A safety plan is a very detailed description of how to ensure that the child and the community are safe. Safety plans may be very helpful when transitioning a child to the home from a treatment setting.

38) **Q:** What is the difference between stabilizing a crisis when beginning to work with a family and developing a formal crisis plan document?
A: One of the first steps in working with a family is to determine whether there is a crisis that needs stabilization before the family is ready to proceed with the other parts of the Child and Family Team process. It is difficult for some families to become fully involved until pressing crisis situations are addressed. For example, a mother who has not had a break for five years and is at a very high stress level may need help taking a much-needed rest before being able attend to other elements of the Child and Family Team Process. This initial crisis stabilization is different from the written Crisis Plan document which the team will later develop. The crisis plan document is preventative in nature. It predicts what could go wrong, plans how to avoid it, and determines how to behave if the situation happens. By contrast, the initial crisis stabilization is a reaction to an immediate need the family has when you begin working with them, in order to help them be able to fully participate in the Child and Family Team process.

Role Clarifications and Facilitator Support:

39) **Q:** How do I act as both a facilitator and the service provider for a family (case manager, counselor, teacher, etc.)? The roles seem incompatible.
A: With some families, this will not be too difficult. With others, it may be extremely challenging. You may have to consciously be able to wear two different hats, and switch between the two, sometimes even in the same meeting. As the service provider/agency representative for the family, you must uphold your agency mandate. As the facilitator, your job is to help the family make plans according to their goals and needs, considering their preferences and using their strengths and community supports. One way to wear both hats simultaneously is to set a "bottom line" (as the agency representative) of what would be acceptable, and then allow the family freedom in making choices as long as that bottom line is met. For example, you might say, "Your child may only live in a home that has been approved through a CPS home study at this time, but beyond that the door is open to possibilities". There may be times where you actually say, "I have to put on my case manager hat for a moment and speak for my agency." Be sure to do so in a positive way that does not blame or shame the parents. Where there are areas the family or child must show progress before they can get their wishes, you may

frame this as a positive goal that you will help rally everyone towards. For example, a parent has been known to give her 15-year old son drugs when he lives at home, and she wants him to start coming for overnight visits, but you, as the agency representative, are worried this might compromise the safety of the child. You might say, "I think overnight visits are an excellent goal. Wearing my probation officer hat, I'm going to say that we've first got to feel sure that he will be safe while at your home. Let's work together toward a plan that will show my agency that you will provide a safe place for him. Right now, that might mean there are some steps to take before overnights begin, but if we put together a strong plan, I think we can work toward that direction." In the event that you are finding it too difficult to wear both the facilitator hat and the agency representative hat simultaneously, speak with your coach or the liaison for your agency to the 200 Kids Project. They will help with identifying how to proceed within your agency on these types of cases, as each agency may have a plan to handle these situations.

40) **Q:** <u>Should I still report abuse/ crimes that I am aware the family is participating in?</u>
A: Make the family aware that while you are there to support them, there are certain circumstances where you may have to file reports about them due to mandated reporting laws. These circumstances may include child abuse or illegal activity. If you have to file an abuse or police report, speak with your supervisor and coach regarding how to proceed. You may wish to inform the family, if it is safe to do so, that you are going to file the report, so that open communication can be maintained.

41) **Q:** <u>What is a coach, and how do I work with one?</u>
A: Each new facilitator will be paired with a coach to help him or her learn the facilitator role. The coach will be a person experienced with the Child and Family Team process. The coach will be available to help with any questions or concerns you have, in addition to helping you proceed through the set of skill development for facilitators. Your coach may accompany you during engagement activities or Child and Family Team Meetings and may offer support and consultation by reviewing your documents and discussing the families you work with.

42) **Q:** <u>Will I have time to use this process, given my current work load?</u>
A: Your agency has selected you to receive training regarding Child and Family Teams, and wants you to be supported and successful. Your supervisor will receive training regarding how to support you in your role. This support will need to be tailored to your specific need within your agency. There are a variety of strategies that may be implemented to help you be successful in this process. If you are feeling unable to accomplish the role due to time constraints, discuss this with your supervisor, and with your coach or agency liaison to the 200 Kids Project. They will work to develop a plan customized to meet your needs and make it possible for you to successfully carry out this role, which should be considered an important part of your workload, not an addition to it.

43) **Q:** Will I need to double document everything -- one copy for my regular file and one for my 300 Kids Project file?
A: Double documentation should not be required. However, there are several forms to be completed that may differ from ones you would normally use with families. These include the following: Informed Consent Form, Strengths and Culture Discovery, Successes and Barriers Log, Flex Funds Forms, Child and Family Team Write-ups, and Crisis and Safety Plans. Each of these is contained in the directory of forms you have been given. These forms are unique to the 200 Kids Project. It is not required that you maintain a separate file for these forms, but you should keep them all together, such as in a section of your existing case file if you have one. Or, you may choose to maintain a completely separate file of forms from the 200 Kids Project. Your agency may develop specific guidelines regarding where to file the documents.

44) **Q:** How is my agency going to use this process? Am I going to use it for all my families? Is everyone going to learn how to do this?
A: This is a statewide effort that spans across all elements of the child-serving systems in Arizona. However, each agency will decide how to use Child and Family Teams within their respective agency. Your agency will decide how to use facilitators in this process—an issue with a broad range of possibilities. If you have ideas or thoughts regarding how the process could be used in your agency, contact your agency liaison to the 200 Kids Project, or the person from your agency who recommended that you participate in the project.

45) **Q:** Do I need to attend every other meeting for the child held by participating agencies for the child -- CPS staffings, group home staffings, mental health staffings, court hearings, IEP meetings, Foster Care Review Boards, etc.? Is there a way to consolidate some of these meetings?
A: While ideal, it may be unrealistic to attend every meeting held for the child. Use judgment regarding the priority of the meeting, and how much it may help the family or child to have you there. Keep in mind, also, that you will likely be inviting the people holding the meetings to attend your meetings, so be respectful and always make at least telephone contact with the person beforehand if you are not able to attend their meeting. You may wish to work with the various team members who are responsible for holding separate meetings to try consolidating your meetings. This has been done successfully already with some families for mental health staffings, group home placement review meetings, school meetings, and CPS case plan staffings. You will make lots of friends if you are able to start consolidating meetings.

46) **Q:** What type of training or certification is available for me as a facilitator of Child and Family Teams?
A: You will receive a certificate recognizing your completion of the training for Child and Family Team facilitators. You will also receive a certificate of completion when you have worked with your coach to complete all of the

competency items for facilitators (the checklist of competencies in your training manual). The training you receive has also been approved by the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners for Continuing Education Units.

47) **Q:** Will I have a chance to get together with other facilitators and talk about what I am learning / struggling with?
A: Subsequent training meetings will offer the chance to do this. In addition, support meetings for facilitators may be considered as an option between trainings or after the training process is complete. If you would be interested in more of this type of support, please tell your coach.

Philosophy of the Child & Family Team Approach:

48) **Q:** Doesn't this process give families too much control of the process? What if things go bad because they are too much in control?
A: An agency does not compromise its societal mandate by using Child and Family Teams. CPS still must ensure the safety of the child, juvenile justice must keep the community safe, schools must educate, etc. However, within these mandates, families are better able to achieve positive outcomes when their preferences are considered, their input is solicited, and they feel respected. Agencies should allow parents as much input and flexibility as possible, even if it means stretching their traditional comfort zones. Provided agency mandates are not violated, families will do better when they are in control of their team.

49) **Q:** What is different about this process compared with other strengths-based work I may have done?
A: Many agencies note strengths in their assessments and treatment plans. However, the Child and Family Team approach moves beyond the identification of strengths. Using an in-depth, continuously-evolving Strengths and Family Culture Discovery, the team develops plans that are customized and draw directly from the strengths, rather than relying on typical categorical services. Many agencies in the past have not been able to implement such plans, even if they were created, due to the complexity of helping a family served by multiple systems while only being able to approach the situation from their single agency's piece of the treatment puzzle. The Child & Family Team process involves an all-around collaborative effort to help teams develop strengths-based plans, and to help providers and agencies support these plans. This is a truly unique process.

50) **Q:** I've tried strengths-based approaches before, and they either seem really phony, or they seem to ignore the real issues going on.
A: When strengths are used simply as a list of nice things about a family, when they are just a polite way of saying negative things about the family, or when they ignore the real needs of a family, they are not likely to feel natural or helpful. Good strengths and culture discoveries are very in-depth reflections of what is good about the family. They do not ignore the real issues, but they state them in a way that is respectful of the family. In-depth strengths discoveries provide the

building blocks for the family's plan. Unless these strengths are actually built upon and included in the plan, the approach is not really strengths-based. In Child and Family Teams, strengths are the foundation for everything else—much more than just pats on the back.

Troubleshooting:

51) **Q:** What do I do if I run into a barrier while trying to get something in place for a family as planned by their Child & Family Team?
A: Find appropriate point of contact for barrier resolution. To find this person, ask questions such as "What is keeping you from being able to do this?" "Is there any way to work around this?" "Who would have to approve this in order for it to happen?" This should lead you to a person who can make a decision about the issue. Speak with that person and see if he or she can work out a way to resolve the barrier. If not, speak with his or her supervisor to see if it can be resolved at that level. If still unresolved, speak with the contact person for the agency the barrier lies within. If it is shared between two or more agencies, speak with the contact person from each agency. If still unresolved, contact the Liaison to the 300 Kids Project for your agency. For all barriers, regardless of whether resolution is accomplished through this process, please complete the form called "Successes and Barriers Log". This form will have you document the barrier, the steps you took to resolve it, and any action still needed. Completion of this form will allow unresolved barriers to be sent to the Systems Barrier subgroup of the Steering Committee for the 300 Kids Project, which has the ability to raise the barrier to the general Steering Committee if appropriate. For barriers that were resolved through the process, documentation on the Successes and Barriers form will help us learn how to resolve these barriers across the system so that you and others do not keep running into the problems repeatedly.

52) **Q:** What do I do when a team member is too dominating in a meeting, or tries to shame or blame the family?
A: If you sense this may become an issue at the meeting, work with the person ahead of time to discuss appropriate actions at the meeting and to plan for any difficulties this might present. If it occurs during the meeting you might use any of the following skills: remind the person about the ground rules ("we agreed not to shame the family"), reframing ("it sounds like you want Mr. Jones to hear your concern for him in this area"), or redirection ("lets go with what we identified earlier on the strengths discovery"). If none of these work you might consider taking a break in the middle of the meeting to speak individually with the person about his or her concern. If the problem continues, you may have to ask the person to leave the meeting, or you may have to end the meeting early ("we're going to have to stop here for the day and pick up next time"). If you have to ask

someone to leave a meeting, or have to end the meeting early, speak with your coach right away about how to proceed from that point.

53) **Q:** What if I approach a family about participating in this process and they do not wish to have a family team, or they will not sign the paperwork (releases and informed consent forms)?
A: The family will not be able to participate in the Child and Family Team process if they are not willing to sign the informed consent paperwork. If they are not willing to choose team members or hold meetings, this may be a challenge as well. However, rather than giving up on the family, consider bringing along a parent volunteer or mentor who may be able to resolve their concerns or explain the benefits of the process in a different way.

54) **Q:** My family's attorney is telling them not to participate in this process. What do I do?
A: You may speak with the attorney about his or her concerns directly. Determine whether the advice not to participate is due to lack of information about the Child and Family Team Process, or whether it is due to legal issues (such as the attorney's client has an open criminal investigation). If the advice is due to legal issues, you may have to choose another family to work with. If the attorney simply misunderstood the process or needed more information, you may be able to help him or her find answers. A parent may (although not typically) chose to have their attorney on the family team, and one could certainly attend a Child and Family Team meeting, as long as they stick to the ground rules. (Once they come to one and find out that confidentiality is addressed, and that the process is focused on helping their clients, they will probably have their concerns alleviated.)

55) **Q:** My family does not want any friends or family on the team, but I have heard that the goal is to have at least 50% informal supports on the team (people who are not paid professionals). What should I do?
A: Some families have few, if any informal supports they feel comfortable inviting to meetings. Be sure to explore these potential team members from the beginning, but if the family is not comfortable including any of them, start with the people they are comfortable with, and work toward building the informal supports as time progresses. Always talk as if there will soon be a day where more informal supports will be included. You may need to help them bring these people to the team by helping them identify and/or approach these people, and work through any concerns they have regarding involving them. Your supervisor or coach may have some helpful strategies for involving more informal supports.

56) **Q:** What is the expectation of team members to attend the Child and Family Team meetings? What if I cannot get a certain team member to ever attend?
A: Team members should be present at as many of the Child and Family Team meetings as possible. When not possible, they should find a way to give or receive input from the meeting, such as speaking with the facilitator ahead of time,

providing written input, appearing telephonically, or sending a representative to the meeting for them. If attendance of a particular member is a concern, speak with the person regarding the issue. Perhaps there is a concern you may be able to help them resolve. Track the barrier on the Successes and Barriers log and speak with your supervisor or coach about ideas for working with this situation.

57) **Q:** What if the family becomes too complex for me to handle as the facilitator?
A: If you believe the situation has become too complex for you to facilitate the team effectively, seek input from your supervisor, coach, and the liaison from your agency for the 200 Kids Project. Each agency will likely have a different approach in this situation, but there should be options to help offer you support.

58) **Q:** How does the Behavioral Health System get service credit for the different elements of the Child and Family Team Process (engagement, team meetings, etc)?
A: A matrix (see attached) has been developed that pairs Behavioral Health billing codes with the elements of the Child and Family Team Process.

Supports and Services:

59) **Q:** How do I access flex funding for a family?
A: Decisions to request flex funding should be made by the child and family team. The request should be based from one of the family's strengths. To submit a request, follow the most current guidelines for accessing flex funding (see attached). Flex funding guidelines can also be found in the ADHS Covered Services Guide.

60) **Q:** What if my Child & Family Team decides to use a non-traditional resource for a family? How do I help them get this arranged?
A: Start by requesting the resources from the most logical sources, and recognize that other team members can accept assignments to help make such arrangements. Explore all additional options for getting the resource from creative sources. If none of these avenues help you get the resource, document the struggle on the Successes and Barriers log and discuss with your coach and/or supervisor how to proceed with the request. The barrier resolution process will help direct you to someone who should be able to help.

61) **Q:** Are there enough resources to go around? If all families end up getting what they need, aren't we going to be short on resources?
A: When Child and Family Teams are working properly, there should be a better use of resource. This means there should be no shortage of needed services. The reason this happens is families begin to use more and more informal supports and community resources and rely less and less on paid, traditional resources. Also, collaboration between agencies decreases the amount of duplicated or unnecessary services, freeing up resources that could be used for other families. Finally, expensive, non-community-based placements can often be avoided or

used only strategically when viable supports build on family capacities to raise their own children.

62) **Q:** Will I really be able to get plans in place for the family I am working with, or am I just going to get the runaround?
A: Child and Family Teams should develop plans that ask for exactly what the child and family need. It will be everyone's job to make sure the family can get this help, however unusual the plans may be. Your team's plan may include elements that have never before been used in the system. Therefore, it may be a learning process to get those plans in place and supported. All plans should be supported by agencies as long as they are legal, do not compromise the social mandate of the agency, and make wise use of resources. A barrier resolution process is in place when you may have difficulty arranging the services requested by the family team. Part of the process asks you to document any barriers on the Successes and Barriers form, which will be reviewed by a team attempting to resolve such barriers across the system. Your coach or liaison will be able to help direct you to appropriate contact resources when you have difficulty getting a requested service in place. A process is underway to help train agency and provider personnel regarding the philosophy behind Child and Family Teams, and to make them familiar with unusual types of requests that may emerge from teams. This should lead to growing general support for the Child and Family Team approach.

63) **Q:** If all agencies involved with the Child and Family are coming together, how do we decide who is going to pay for what?
A: In an ideal world, there would be one large pot of money that all parts of the system of care contributed to and accessed. Absent this, decisions have to be made regarding who pays for various services. A traditional approach to this challenge would be having people pay for what makes the most sense (CPS for parent aides, mental health for counseling, DDD for habilitation, schools for school transportation, etc.). However, the lines are not always clear even in these areas. A less traditional approach would be to get the agencies to work together to negotiate or divide costs. Any Federalized (Medicaid) funding available should be maximized when determining who will pay for services. Before lining up all of the traditional services, consider whether the services could be located within the community (church, non-profit organizations, family or friends, etc.), or whether they are necessary at all (such as duplicate assessments). Consider whether the service need truly originates from the strengths and needs of the family. These considerations may reduce the amount of paid services that are required to begin with, making the job of deciding who pays for what much easier.